



# FEMA

## Laguna Beach Goat Vegetation Management Project

**Laguna Beach, CA** – Laguna Beach has been using goats as part of its fuel reduction and vegetation management program since the early 1990s. City Manager Ken Frank got the idea from a similar program in the San Francisco Bay area. The program was expanded after a wildfire burned across 14,000 acres, destroying or damaging 441 homes in the beach community in 1993.

Because of the climate, types of natural vegetation, and expansive wildlands in Southern California, including wildlands that reach into the city, there is an ongoing risk of wildfires. Fully aware of the risk, the Laguna Beach Fire Department is very proactive in vegetation management.

One of the best ways to control wildfires is to control the amount of fuel available to feed the flames. These areas can be difficult to reach by most vegetation management equipment due to the nature of the terrain – rocks, canyons, and steep inclines. The introduction of goat herds in these areas has proven to be an ideal solution to the problem.

In 1995, Laguna Beach applied for and received a grant from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which is administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. FEMA's grant was \$396,000 and the city's share of costs for the expanded program was \$132,000. The FEMA grant funded the program for two years and the city has continued the effort ever since, at an annual cost of \$125,000.

The goats work exclusively on 11 fuel modification zones located on the outside edges of the city. Since California weather allows it, the goats work year-round and are moved from place-to-place as needed. Depending on the amount of rain and vegetation growth each year, as few as 75 and as many as 600 goats are used. A movable goat pen with electric fencing keeps the goats from wandering off and protects them from coyotes and other wild animals, said Lardie.

Fuel reduction by goat grazing is more widely accepted than chemical and mechanical alternatives because of its sustainability. Another added benefit to the program is the cost, which can be considerably lower than other methods available.



Orange County,  
California



### Quick Facts

Year:

**1993**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$396,000.00 (Actual)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Vegetation Management**

Primary Funding:

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**